

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 15, 2012



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With Train Rides Behind the Historic Sierra No. 3 All Weekend, Railtown 1897 Steam Train Operating Season Opens on Saturday, March 31

***Calaveras, Mariposa and Tuolumne County Residents Visit & Ride FREE
All Opening Weekend!***

JAMESTOWN, Calif. – Beginning the weekend of Saturday, March 31 and Sunday, April 1, Railtown 1897 State Historic Park (SHP) in Jamestown will resume offering popular steam-powered excursion train rides on weekends from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. To kick off the new season, historic rides behind the famous “Movie Star Locomotive” Sierra No. 3 will be offered all weekend long. And, during opening weekend only, residents of Calaveras, Mariposa and Tuolumne counties can visit the Park and ride for free with proof of residency. Visitors from near and far are encouraged to step aboard for a six-mile, 40-minute roundtrip ride along the rails of the famous “Movie Railroad,” passing through California’s scenic Gold Country.

To kick off the first day of operations on Saturday, March 31, the public is invited to attend the “Early Bird” program that starts at 7 a.m. in the Roundhouse to watch as the crew lights the fire and prepares the locomotive for the day. The locomotive is started with the tossing of a burning rag into the firebox, then the crew works to fuel, lubricate and water the engine as the boiler is slowly brought up to temperature. Knowledgeable guides will be on hand in the Roundhouse to narrate every step of the process. Then, interested spectators can follow it out into the yard and watch the turntable in operation as the crew moves the locomotive into place at the Depot. The official ceremonies begin with Vietnam Veteran Jim Sutherland performing the national anthem and a raising of the flag at 9:45 a.m. followed by a grand entrance and ceremonial whistle blowing. Mark Twain (portrayed by Pat Kaunert) will have the honors to call out the first “All Aboard!” for the season at 10:45 a.m.

Throughout the day on Saturday and Sunday, many other special activities will be offered as well, including live music both days -- performed on-board the excursion trains by the popular Dave Rainwater -- tours of the Roundhouse, and demonstrations of the historic belt-driven machine shop.

Capacity is limited for tickets for the steam train excursion rides so visitors are encouraged to arrive early. All tickets include Park admission and are available on a first-come, first-served basis at the ticket window beginning at 10 a.m. on the days the trains are running. Excursion train ride tickets aboard “mountain observation cars” are \$13 for adults, \$6 for youths ages 6-17 and kids five and under are free.

For More, Visit www.parks.ca.gov/CapitalDistrict

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After opening weekend, Railtown 1897 SHP plans to offer steam-powered excursion train rides behind Sierra No. 3 on Saturdays and vintage diesel locomotives on Sundays through the 2012 operating season. Because the schedule is subject to change with expanded service on holiday weekends, etc., visitors are encouraged to call 209-984-3953 or visit www.railtown.org for updated information.

About Railtown 1897 State Historic Park

Operated by California State Parks with assistance from the nonprofit California State Railroad Museum Foundation, Railtown 1897 State Historic Park offers year-round tours plus train rides weekends April-October (selected dates only November-December). Known as "The Movie Railroad," the Park and its trains have been featured in hundreds of feature films, TV shows, and commercials. The Park is located at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Reservoir Road in Jamestown, reached by highways 49/108. As of 1/2/12, Railtown 1897 State Historic Park is open Thursdays through Mondays (except for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day) and the Park's operating hours vary by season: April-October, 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; November-March, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. For more information, call Railtown 1897 State Historic Park at (209) 984-3953, or visit our Web site at www.railtown1897.org